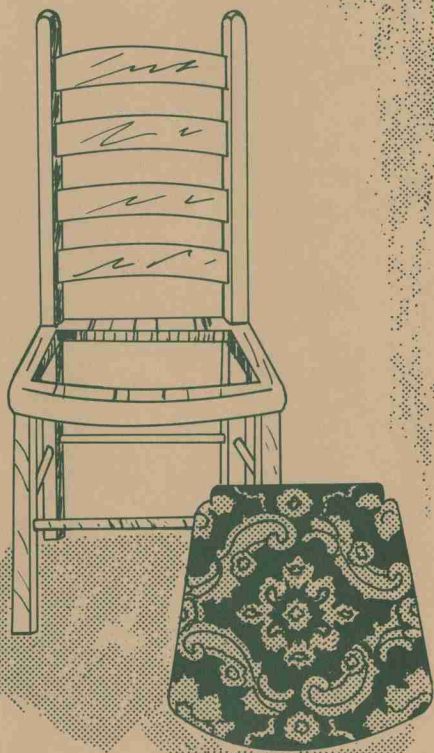
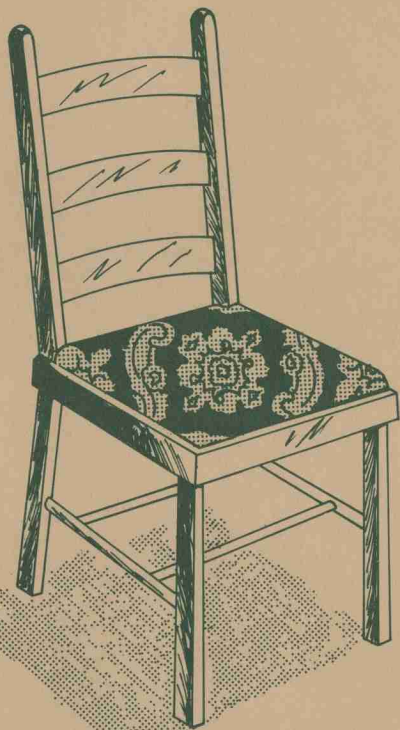


# How To Reupholster Simple Chair Seats



## How to Reupholster Simple Chair Seats

You can give your room a new look by re-covering frayed chairs. The easiest type of chair to upholster is the dining-room or kitchen chair which has a thin padded seat without springs. The seat padding for these chairs is usually supported by either a wood base or webbing.

Before you begin, decide whether the chair is worth your time. A chair often can be completely restored with good quality new fabric at one-fourth to one-half the cost of a new one.

### Tools and Supplies

Simple upholstering can be done with tools that are available in most homes. However, a few professional tools make the job easier. As you check your chair for fabric, also plan for your tools and supplies.

#### General tools

1. Sharp shears
2. Medium-weight hammer
3. Yardstick or ruler
4. Tack puller or screw driver
5. Pins
6. Soft pencil and paper for pattern
7. No. 3 upholsterers' tacks
8. Fabric for outer cover
9. Decorative braid or tacks
10. Dark cambric for dust cover on bottom

#### For work with webbing

1. Jute webbing, 3½ to 4 inches wide
2. Webbing stretcher or a substitute such as:
  - a. A block of wood about 1 x 2 x 5 inches

- b. Pliers
3. No. 8 or No. 10 tacks

#### For work with foam padding

1. Plastic or rubber foam
2. Ball point pen or indelible pencil
3. Adhesive tape
4. Rubber cement

#### For work with other padding

1. New padding as needed:
  - a. Upholsterers' rubberized curled hair
  - b. Upholsterers' felted cotton
2. Burlap or cotton mesh to use between webbing and loose moss
3. Muslin for undercover, if you wish

### Fabric Selection

Select fabric for covering chair. The fabric should be:

1. Firm and easy to work with.
2. Colorfast, resist soiling, be easy to clean and not shrink.
3. Right color or pattern for your color scheme. Chair pads may be brighter, more intense in color than walls.
4. A width which will cut to good advantage without extreme waste. Upholstery fabrics may be bought in 48-, 50-, and 54-inch widths.

When new seat padding is foam rubber and plastic is chosen for the outside cover, plan to use a layer of muslin over the foam rubber. Foam rubber in direct contact with some plastics will fall apart or become brittle. If the cover is a very firm, closely woven, non-plastic fabric, a layer of muslin is not necessary, but it will help in getting a good smooth cover and the cover will last longer.

## Prepare the Frame

Notice how the original cover and padding are put on the chair. Take off all old upholstery. Smooth corners and any rough edges that might cut the new cover. Reglue, reinforce or refinish the frame if needed. If there are many tack holes in the wood frame, fill them with plastic wood. Dry plastic wood overnight.

## Re-Cover a Slip Seat

A slip seat has a padded wood base attached to the chair frame with screws put in from the bottom. It is used on both wood and metal chairs. (Fig. 1). Turn chair upside down on a table and take off old seat by removing screws that hold it. (Fig. 2). Use tack puller or screw driver to take out tacks that hold old cover and padding. Save the old cover for a pattern.

If the old padding is lumpy, matted or flattened, you should renovate or replace it. Add to or replace cotton if it seems thin. Sisal or tow (a light tan fiber) is usually broken and matted in an old chair and should be discarded. If you use new padding, consider getting urethane (plastic) or rubber foam or rubberized curled hair. These are easy to use, comfortable and resilient and will not mat or lump. A 1- to 1½-inch thickness is usually used for a slip seat. Use a layer of cotton over rubberized curled hair.

Make a paper pattern to cut foam or rubberized hair padding. Make the pattern ¼-inch larger on all sides than the wood base. Anchor the pattern to foam with tape. Mark cutting line on foam with ball point pen or dampened indelible pencil. Cut with scissors dipped in water.

A wood base for foam should have holes in it. This allows for air passage which is needed for comfort and longer wear for the fabric. Drill holes ¼-inch to ⅜-inch in diameter



Fig. 1—Slip seats

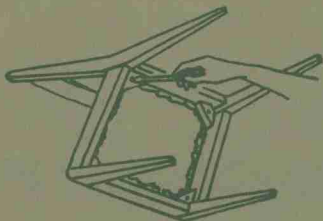


Fig. 2—Take out screws to remove seat.

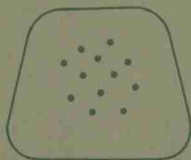


Fig. 3

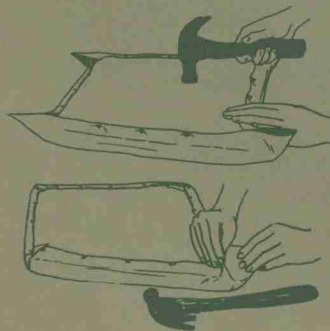


Fig. 4—Covering the slip seat.

- A. Tack seat cover on bottom in center of each side.  
 B. Lay corners in uniform pleats and tack down.

and space 3 inches apart. (Fig. 3). To anchor foam or rubberized hair to base, spread rubber cement around edges of both, and in a "X" through the center. Let dry until "tacky." Then press firmly together.

You may use a muslin undercover over moss and cotton padding to help shape the seat. Put it on like the outer cover.

Cut the new cover large enough to go over the padding and turn it back  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 inches on the bottom of the seat. (Fig. 4 A). Place the padded seat upside down on the wrong side of the outer cover. Center the seat on the cover. Draw the fabric over the back of the seat and put three or four tacks, one inch apart, midway between the corners and one-half inch from the edge of the covering. (Fig. 4 A). Pull the cover to the front and back in the same way. Then do each side.

Leave corners until last. Lay fullness at corners in uniform pleats and pull until smooth and wrinkle free. Cut away excess fabric and tack down (Fig. 4 B).

Put seat back in the chair and fasten in place with screws.

### Seat With Jute Webbing Base

Put the chair upside down on the work surface with the front next to you. Measure and mark the location of webbing strips on the bottom of the seat frame. Strips should be no more than 2 to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches apart—2 inches is better. When possible, locate webbing so two pieces cross where a spring is to be placed.

Begin with a back-to-front webbing strip which is near the center of the seat. Place end of webbing on the back of the seat frame with 1 inch extending beyond the frame edge. Place five No. 12 or 14 webbing tacks as in Fig. 5 A. Don't use old tack holes. Fold the short end of webbing over the five tacks and put four more a little below the first ones. (Fig. 5 B). Stretch the webbing straight across the seat to the front edge. Hook the stretcher into the webbing as in Fig. 6. Then press it down to pull the webbing very tight. While it is held with the stretcher, put in five tacks as

before. Cut webbing 1½-inch beyond the tacks. Fold over and fasten with four tacks. Put on the rest of the front-to-back strips in the same way.

Next stretch and tack the side-to-side webbing strips. As you place these strips, interlace them over the front-to-back strips.

To stretch a short piece of webbing, pin it to an extra piece of webbing with a mattress needle until it is tacked. If you cannot get a webbing stretcher, you can stretch webbing by wrapping it around a block of wood. Brace the wood against the chair and pull the webbing as tight as possible. Also, one person can stretch webbing with a pair of pliers while another tacks it.

Replace padding and outer cover. (Fig. 7). The cover may be tacked on the bottom, or on the top or edge of the seat. You may trim an exposed fabric edge with ornamental nails, covered cord or trimming braid. (Fig. 8). Tack dark cambric on the bottom of the chair as a dust cover for protection.

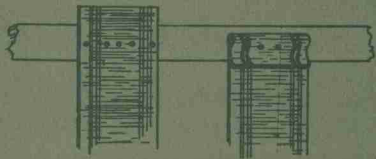


Fig. 5—Tack on webbing.

A. Step 1

B. Step 2

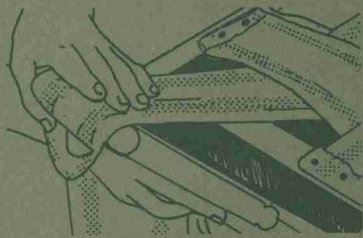


Fig. 6—Stretch webbing with a webbing stretcher.

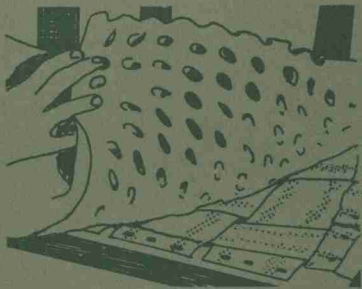


Fig. 7—A webbing base for foam.



Dining room chair with webbing base. Cover is tacked under the seat. Decorative tacks outline the edge.



Chair with fabric tacked at the top of wood seat frame. Gimp braid is glued on to cover tacks and edges of fabric.



Decorative tacks across front attach fabric of slip seat to frame of chair. Gimp or covered cord could be used, but would get more wear.



Cording and fabric boxing cover the edge of upholstered slip seat.



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Fig.8—Kinds of trim for seat edges.

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